

## **Division of Workforce Development (DWD) Administered Program Integration Guidelines**

There has been an ongoing effort to integrate services since the early 90s here in Missouri. The one-stop grant, the merger of employment and training programs into DWD (formerly JDT and ES/Job Service), and the passage of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) have all developed plans to address integration. There have been significant strides made in some areas, but there is still a long way to go in most areas. Siloed funding, past culture and failure to communicate and change in the way we do business has hampered the integration effort. These barriers must be turned into opportunities so cost-effective customer service can be provided. With limited staff and funding, the time has come to dump the "them and us" mentality and make true integration happen. Many WIA and Wagner-Peyser (W/P) services can and must be closer coordinated to provide customers optimum service and improve career center performance results.

Customer satisfaction will only be achieved through efficient delivery of excellent products that meet customer requirements. This can only be achieved through cooperation, teamwork, and elimination of duplicative functions. The Workforce Development System in Missouri must serve a universal population in an accountable manner while ensuring customer choice. In order for this to happen staff will need to work in teams by function, not program.

The Continuous Improvement Reviews, as well as discussions among the Service Integration Team members, established that there is a need to improve staff awareness of all partner services. The use of a "triage" process to assess with the customer their needs is another area that was identified as being an opportunity for improvement. Initial contact is the most important and customer needs are more likely met if the person who first meets the customer is trained in the wide range of programs available and how those programs meet human needs.

An email was submitted to all DWD staff, as well as WIA providers, to help evaluate how things are going in the Missouri Career Centers. Items addressed included the use of triage, orientation, coordinated case management, integrated/coordinated customer interviews between programs, interagency communication, how to avoid duplication of services and team building. The responses from this email were reviewed and used in developing the guidelines. Excerpts from the WIA Final Rules (see attachment 1) were used to develop the following DWD Administered Program Integration Guidelines.

The Service Integration Team was chartered and sponsored by Rick Beasley to develop integration guidelines. It is the intent of DWD to ensure that integration of services is in fact implemented throughout the state of Missouri in order to achieve seamless service delivery to our customers. The Field Services Section will be including observation and evaluation of the implementation of the integration guidelines as part of their ongoing continuous improvement reviews.

The Division of Workforce Development hereby adopts the following guidelines:

- **Customer Service Desk/Triage** - Each center will develop a triage system to ensure customers are made aware of and referred to all appropriate services. This triage system will include a process for the entry of a complete work registration and the creation of a Staff Assisted Pool (SAP) record in Toolbox. Having a complete work registration is critical to the effective placement of all career center customers regardless of the funding source(s) providing services.

It will be recognized that although triage is an excellent means of referring customers to services it in itself does not necessarily integrate services. Care must be taken to ensure that the triage system is not in fact limiting customer service. An example would be if a customer is referred only to Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) services and not also to the WIA dislocated worker programs. If these two services are properly integrated, then this may not be an issue. For triage to work effectively, the customer must be viewed as the customer of the career center and not a specific service provider. As much as possible, staff will consider themselves as staff of the career center, not their respective funding source. Within the DWD administered programs, it is no longer "we and them" it is "US". Effective internal career center communication and referral systems must be maintained to make triage work effectively. Staff cross training so all partners remain aware of the other partner's basic services and general eligibility requirements must be an ongoing project. To increase the effectiveness of the triage system, career center management must simplify customer flow, co-locate service providers providing services to targeted groups, and maintain a knowledgeable receptionist or center greeter.

- **Orientation to services** - A process must be in place in each center to ensure all customers are provided a comprehensive orientation to services available. In cases where dual enrollment will possibly enhance service delivery, a joint orientation will be considered to clarify which partner will provide what services. Examples of this would be TAA/NAFTA and WIA dislocated worker programs, Job Corps and WIA youth programs and worker profiling. Orientation can be done in various manners (one-on-one, groups, brochures, videos, etc.) but must be comprehensive, timely and customer service orientated.
- **Services provided customers** - A main criterion of WIA is customer choice. Although career center staff will ensure all customers have the information needed such as LMI or vocational counseling to make sound service selection, the customer will BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN DECISION-MAKING. Early intervention, especially in mass layoff events, is critical to customer service selection as often decisions are based on educational marketing or peer influence and may not be appropriate choices for the customer, the local labor market or a cost-effective expenditure of training funds. It is imperative that dual enrollment options are pursued to ensure the customer is offered all appropriate services available.

- **Integrated intake, eligibility determination, and client tracking** - If a customer is not likely to need WIA, Welfare-to-Work and other programs, that customer may receive additional staff-assisted services through the labor exchange input into the job seeker area of Toolbox.

In order to enhance the accessibility of all partner staff, the new system will include integration of job seeker registration, posting of services, employer/work site information, job order entry, and matching/referral capabilities. Development has begun on a system to include an online Individual Employability Plan (IEP) which allows partner agencies to share service data and case management information on joint customers. The provision of a common intake and joint IEP will enhance the customers access to a seamless delivery of services.

All partners are strongly encouraged to utilize this system OR ITS BY-PRODUCTS.

- **Investor participation and cooperation** - Clearly the success and failure of a one-stop system lies with the level of cooperation, sharing of resources and funding, and joint accountability. It is imperative that all partner staff share in the functions that are common to the services provided to all customers. Cross training will be provided so all career center staff can assist their respective customers with triage, resource room services, intake and assessment and other services as appropriate. Examples of this might be: Veteran staff assisting with the TAA or WIA service plan development and administration on dislocated veterans, or WIA veteran customers being referred to Workforce Linkage Workshops. Rotation of all unrestricted center staff to conduct orientation or work in the resource room is another prime example of this type of resource sharing. These duties will be shared among the full-time, colocated partners; no single partner is responsible for these common functions of the career center system. Veterans staff should be involved in giving both orientation and career center services to veterans, sharing information about all services with veterans using the career center.
- **Specific Program Integration** -

**TAA/WIA integration** - All too often the Trade Act and WIA Title I dislocated worker programs have been viewed as distinct, unrelated programs when they are in fact very similar. Trade affected workers are - by definition - dislocated workers. Complete integration of the services that all dislocated workers receive is an essential element of the seamless service delivery system envisioned in the career centers. This integration improves the quality of services, maximizes the efficient allocation of available resources, improves career center performance, and enhances outcomes for the customers. Services available for all dislocated workers include assessment, counseling, development of an employability plan and case management. These services will be the same for both TAA participants and those served with WIA or W/P Act programs. There is currently a joint reemployment plan in place to serve this group of workers. Veteran staff will have close and active involvement in the services provided to dislocated veterans.

**Job Corps/WIA Youth Programs** - Job Corps participants can benefit from a variety of training and supportive services from the WIA youth providers in the career centers. Job Corps offers an excellent referral option for some WIA youth participants. Job Corps participants can benefit from a variety of career center services such as GED training, supportive services and other vocational training. Placement and job search assistance will be provided by career center staff to Job Corps graduates to help them enter the labor force in a more timely manner.

**Veteran services** - Federal regulations require that programs funded in whole or part by Wagner-Peyser funds shall provide priority service to veterans. Staff funded under the Veteran's Employment and Training Service (DVOPs and LVERs) must limit their activities to serving veterans. In the career centers, veterans will be provided the full array of services available and the DVOPs and LVERs will facilitate and assist the veterans in accessing all the appropriate available employment and training programs, including WIA programs. The veteran staff will assist with the reemployment services planning and assist in the provision of case management of all veteran customers. The veteran staff will also provide resource room assistance to veterans to allow other partner staff to provide services to other customers.

**Worker Profiling** - Services provided to workers selected for reemployment services by the Worker Profiling system must be closely coordinated between WIA, W/P and UI service providers. Career center management will utilize triage and closely evaluate the orientation process to ensure customers are being referred to all appropriate services. Veteran service staff will be the primary provider of profiling orientation and will be closely involved with additional service delivery to veteran claimants. Close coordination with the unemployment insurance (UI) system and timely file updating is needed to ensure profiled workers are paid UI benefits properly.

**Services to Employers** - Upon implementation of the Single Point of Contact system for employers, all DWD administered program staff will be trained on the procedures to be followed in providing employer services. This training will allow both DWD and WIA funded staff to enter job orders into the job bank for referral. This will eliminate duplicated systems and ensure all openings are available for all career center customers.

**WIA Title I** - WIA funding presents opportunities for service integration that go beyond program specific boundaries. Title I is directly planned by the WIB and chief elected officials to serve a diverse population with multiple needs. Program services range from short-term core through long-term training; each with a different impact on our customers. Coupled with program specific interventions is the availability of supportive services to assist customers with other needs that influence their ability to participate in program activities.

Title I services must be integrated with other programs and services offered in a career center. It cannot be a stand-alone provider of service, but instead coordinated closely in order to provide coordinated case management and holistic services to customers. This includes participation in the center's triage system, resource room staffing, coordinated case management and assessment. Cross training of Title I staff in partner services is

essential so they can make informed judgements about referrals and inter-agency interventions.

**Customer - focused Service** - These integration guidelines are based upon one key principle, comprehensive service to customers based upon assessed or expressed need rather than routine processes. Contrary to some widespread thoughts, WIA is not a "work-first" program. Although it is recognized that many customers will greatly benefit from various pieces of labor market information and labor exchange activities, it is not appropriate for all. Each local career center's triage/assessment system must reasonably distinguish between customer needs and service availability and then provide interventions that will lead to long-term, self-sufficient employment.

**Local Empowerment** - Local empowerment is essential to making any service integration guidelines realistic. Contrary to some beliefs, the entity that establishes local structure, coordinated service patterns and inter-agency roles and responsibilities is the one-stop operator. It is not the state's role to dictate how local operations inter-relate for the individual customer and what happens on a daily basis. The state's role is in establishing general operating principles that all career centers must use. Local empowerment is the guiding principle behind career center systems and the freedom to develop creative and innovative approaches to systems keeping within the broader limits imposed by the different funding and programmatic legislation.